

Jesus says to us: hear and speak

There are two miracle-stories that occur only in Mark's gospel: the healing of the blind man at Bethsaida, and today's story of the healing of the deaf-mute. Both stories reveal to us the truly human face of Jesus who responds with compassion to people's infirmities. But they also reveal the healing powers of the promised Messiah who will 'open the eyes of the blind' and 'unseal the ears of the deaf' (Isaiah). However, in both Markan stories, Jesus is also the reluctant Messiah who performs his miracles out of public view and orders people not to tell anyone! Biblical scholars have long debated the meaning of the so-called "messianic secret" in Mark's gospel. We may say it did not work very well as the disciples could not hold their tongues, proclaiming to all who would listen: "he makes the deaf hear and the dumb speak"! Another explanation is that Jesus does not want people to focus on him, but on the 'kingdom of God'. Most importantly, although exhibiting miraculous powers, Jesus does not want to be identified as some kind of celebrity or political Messiah since, in his own words, "the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve and give his life as a ransom for many" (Mk 10:45). Indeed, the full reality of Jesus' messiahship could only be revealed in the experience of the Cross which is also at the heart of true discipleship. In broader perspective, we should realise the disciples in Mark's gospel are depicted as lacking faith – or being metaphorically blind and deaf. Even

Peter, James and John – who saw Jesus transfigured on the mountain (Mk 9:2-23) soon fell into crude misinterpretations, thinking of power and fame rather than loving service of others in the way of the Cross. So, despite all the miracles in Mark's Gospel, Jesus' full identity as Christ the Messiah and Saviour-figure remains a 'secret' to the often clueless disciples who fail to see Jesus as much more than a miracle-worker. While Peter does move to acknowledge Jesus as the Christ, he then shows his faulty understanding by failing to accept Jesus' message that the Son of Man is to suffer and die – resulting in Jesus' rebuke to Peter: "Get behind me Satan!" (Mk 8:27-33). "Then looking up to heaven, Jesus sighed and said: 'Ephphatha', that is, 'Be opened'". This healing message of Jesus to the deaf-mute is spoken to his disciples and to us who are often deaf to the full message of the Gospel and dumb in our failure to witness Jesus Christ to the world. Like Jesus' closest companions, we too are afraid of the full call to discipleship which includes identifying with Jesus the "suffering servant". We are invited to find in Jesus' compassion a truly human way of responding to people in distress. More than this, we are invited to be disciples of Christ the Messiah who brings healing and hope to our world through the reality of the Cross and miracle of the Resurrection.

Gerard Hall SM
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MOTHER OF PERPETUAL HELP PARISH

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23rd SUNDAY OF ORDINARY TIME
Saturday 4 & Sunday 5 September 2021



Dear God,
bless all the fathers in the world.
Lord, we ask that You guide them to be
good role models
and loving to their children.

We also ask that You help them to be a father like You are.
Give them grace and patience to handle situations in a loving way.
Amen.

St Joseph
Pray for us!



Dear Parishioners,

Happy Father's Day to all you Dads! And to all Grandfathers, and to single parents who are both Father and Mother to your children. And to you children whose Father may be far off in these Covid times, and especially to you who have grown up without a Father. May Sunday be a special day.

I do hope that you can celebrate in some way in your bubble, and make the day special. I have heard of zoom parties — not like the real thing, but better than nothing.

Little has been happening in terms of our parishes, except for a large amount of informal pastoral care. Phone calls are so appreciated by those who receive them. This Sunday, please think of those who are locked down in retirement villages and hospitals. Please give them a call, and bring a smile to their day.

One zoom meeting I had was with the priests of our deanery. They had some interesting stories. One parish was asking every parishioner to ring six people on the parish role, or at least to make six calls to someone per day — a big ask.

Pakuranga has made itself an essential service and has a whole team of people bringing food parcels to over 700 people. There are some who pack, others who deliver, and others who pick up food and other essentials.

Wonderful! Many priests have conducted zoom funeral services with families who are so sad that they cannot be with their loved ones. Many future memorial services are being planned.

This Sunday is the 23rd Sunday of the year. I have put up a homily on the Sunday readings for you. You can access the Sunday Readings on: <https://bible.usccb.org/bible/readings/083020.cfm> Read them first, before you listen to the video. Thank you, Akata Siale, for your hymn to accompany the readings.

You can view my Sunday homily here:
<https://share.icloud.com/photos/01XYDs-9tqrO-4zX9VRp2ZR9A>
as well as on Facebook and Instagram.

Lastly, a word of encouragement. This lockdown is into its third week, and it is not easy. For families, this Father's day offers some relief.

As always, there can be a positive side, so lots of encouragement to make the most of the positive opportunities that this time together offers. If you are struggling or really stuck, please reach out.

There is always a listening ear or help at hand.

May God bless us in this challenging time!

Fr John Dunn



A reminder that the Diocese continues to provide broadcast **Sunday Mass**. It is uploaded at 5.30pm Saturday night (as per a Vigil Mass time) to the **Youtube channel Auckland Catholic** <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCb7o1XYfQet-mOW1mJSzfow> It is also broadcast on Shine TV Sundays at 2.00pm Free-to-air TV Channel 25, Sky TV Channel 201.

Cathedral Appeal 2021 Special Collection

This money is used to support long term maintenance of our Mother Church, the Cathedral of St Patrick & St Joseph's, a heritage entrusted in us. **The envelopes will be at the entrance of the Church after lockdown.**



Next Week: 24th Sunday of Ordinary Time 11 & 12 Sep 2021
1. Isaiah 50:5-9 2. James 2:14-18 3. Gospel Mark 8:27-35



We remember in prayer our parishioners whose anniversaries occur during August & September: Mitchel Hall, Lois Tomas, Robin Turkel, Charles Bellamy, Johannes Karstins, Gwendoline Shennan, Helen Kelly, Marion James, Catherine Moran, Guy Savy, Maureen Meyer, Kath McGrath, Patrick Temm